

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

## The Twentieth Century's Call to Christendom.

I. The call is emphasized by a fact. That fact is that we are just approaching the Nineteen-Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Christ.

The Nineteenth Century of the Christian Era will close and the Twentieth Century begin somewhere between Christmas of this year (1896), and February to April of next year (1897). This has been established by the investigations and calculations of the best scholarship; so that it may be said to be universally acknowledged that Christ was not born on Christmas in the year 754 after the founding of Rome—as Dionysius mistakenly put it in making up our common chronology, and as the Roman church endorsed it—but in the year 750 or 749, the latter year being far the more probable, and toward the springtime the more probable date. This conclusion rests especially upon the indisputable fact that Herod the Great, in whose reign the birth of Christ took place, died in the fourth year before the commencement of our Era, or in the year 4 B.C., according to the proper reckoning. That will be nineteen hundred years ago next Easter.

The Nineteen-Hundredth Anniversary of Christ's birth is not, therefore, several years off, but just upon us—not further away than the close of the present year or the opening months of 1897.\*

It is not, however, the purpose in the present connection to present with

\* See Matthew ii. 1; Josephus, "Antiquities," xvii. 9, 8; Andrews, "Life of Christ;" Robinson, "Harmony of the Gospels.

any fulness the arguments that have led the scholars of Christendom to the so general acceptance of this change of date. We hope to have them presented soon by able and authoritative writers on this subject. Our present purpose is strictly practical, for—

II. The call is to an imperative and pressing duty.

The simple fact that we are just to cross the threshold of the Twentieth Century ought to be enough to rouse all Christendom to this duty. Our desire is to let the Twentieth Century utter its own trumpet-call to our twenty thousand subscribers, largely heralds of Christ's Gospel, and to our much larger number of readers, and through them to the Church of Christendom, for the final rally of the Nineteenth Century with a view to final victory for the Gospel in the opening years of the Twentieth Century. Brethren, does not Christ call us all just now by his Word and by the signs of the times, to co-operate in inaugurating a movement *all along the line for the immediate evangelization of the world?*\* We ask you, in Christ's name, to consider carefully and prayerfully, some reasons that urge to such a movement.

1st. Nineteen centuries have passed since Christ uttered the "Go ye" of the Great Commission, and it is still

\* The present crisis in Christendom and the reasons for a great and immediate forward movement of the whole Church are presented in "Christ's Trumpet Call to the Ministry, or the Preacher and the Preaching for the Present Crisis," by D. S. Gregory, D.D., LL.D., recently published by Funk & Wagnalls Co.